

*A. N. Krioukov***MEAD AND HUSSERL ON THE SELF AND IDENTIFICATION OF THE SUBJECT\***

Out of many different strategies in the philosophy of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the author compares two completely different philosophies: G. H. Mead's social behaviorism and E. Husserl's transcendental phenomenology with respect to the self-arising problem. For Mead, the initial point of his theory is the social conduct or person's behavior, whereas for Husserl, the life of the isolated transcendental Ego is of greatest value. The author emphasizes, though the main ideas of both philosophers have different methodological grounds, one finds, that the matter of primary importance for them. This is the question of who is an executor of the social acts (Mead) and the transcendental phenomenological act (Husserl)? Through an analysis of the main ideas of both philosophers ('I' and 'Me' as principles of the subject by Mead, and intentionality, time analysis, and intersubjectivity by Husserl) the author demonstrates, firstly, how the question of self-identity is solved in both conceptions, and, secondly, how to argue the advantages of phenomenology. The article leads to the conclusion: methodologically Mead's social behaviorism is relativistic, as far as his theory of subjectivity depends on the social context. Husserl's method, despite its complexity, offers a clear subject structure and therefore can be regarded as more productive for the theory of self. Refs 15.

*Keywords:* Mead, Husserl, transcendental Idealism, behaviorism, phenomenology, Ego, intersubjectivity, philosophy of language, self.

*A. Н. Крюков***МИД И ГУССЕРЛЬ О САМОСТИ И ИДЕНТИФИКАЦИИ СУБЪЕКТА**

Среди множества стратегий в философии начала XX столетия в своем исследовании я остановлюсь на рассмотрении двух философских стратегий: социального бихевиоризма Дж. Г. Мида и трансцендентальной феноменологии Э. Гуссерля, рассматривая вопрос о возникновении самости. Для Мида исходной точкой является социальное поведение личности, для Гуссерля же в этом смысле важное значение имеет жизнь изолированного трансцендентального Эго. Несмотря на то что основные идеи обоих мыслителей имеют различные методологические основания, можно выделить один вопрос, принципиальный для них обоих: кто является исполнителем социальных актов (Мид) и трансцендентально-феноменологических актов (Гуссерль)? На примере анализа основных положений концепций обоих философов («I» и «Me» как принципы субъективности у Мида, интенциональность, временная аналитика, интерсубъективность — у Гуссерля) я намереваюсь, во-первых, продемонстрировать, как решается вопрос о самости и идентичности в обеих концепциях, а во-вторых, показать, в чем состоит преимущество феноменологического метода. Тезис звучит так: социальный бихевиоризм Мида — это релятивистский метод, и его теория субъективности зависит от социальной ситуации. Метод Гуссерля при всей своей сложности и противоречивости предлагает более четкую структуру субъекта. Метод исследования носит компаративно-систематический характер. Библиогр. 15 назв.

*Ключевые слова:* Мид, Гуссерль, трансцендентальный идеализм, бихевиоризм, феноменология, эго, философия языка, самость.

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## Introduction

Among the philosophical strategies of the 20th century, one question arises concerning the problem of the selfhood of the subject. The concept “subject” is a relatively new one in the historical philosophical context. On the one hand, its definition is clear: there is a thinking subject that investigates the objects of the world. On the other we can ask additional questions about the methods of investigation and about the structure of the subject itself, about the identification point of the thinking position. But if we leave aside the most disputable questions about the definition of possibility from Kant’s transcendental idea of the ‘I’, we can try to reformulate the question. Instead of looking for methodological ways to find the ‘I’ as an object, we can look more broadly at the principles of the subject’s structure, and speak about the self-arising of the subject. We do not need to try to define the ‘I’ as a subject-object, instead we can try to find a means of the self-arising which can help to understand the structure of the ‘I’ through the genetic method.

The amount of literature devoted to the problem of defining the ‘I’ is impressive. I would like to focus my research on two different strategies — Mead and Husserl’s. Mead’s general idea is that the subject, the ‘I’, is the product of a social construction. The self arises only in the act of the social interaction. The self arises in a constitutional process but it is not independent and it will be constituted only through contact with other subjects. Conversely, Husserl’s phenomenological theory of intersubjectivity is based on a completely different principle: the ‘I’ is itself a constitutional principle, not constituted by others.

It means that we must deal with two completely different conceptions of the constitution of the self. In this respect, I would like to follow up the differences between these two conceptions, and to compare their theoretical background, to conclude if the phenomenology is a more promising method to describe the constitution of the self.

### Theoretical Backgrounds of Mead’s Conception of the Self

Mead expresses the idea of a social behaviorism in this way: “<...> we are starting out with a given social whole of complex group activity, into which we analyze the behavior of each of the separate individuals composing it” [1, p. 7]. This means that the social behaviorist works not from the side of one isolated person, but from the social environment, which is a necessary condition for building personality — the self. “For social psychology, the whole (society) is prior to the part (individuality)” [1, p. 7]. Why is social psychology behavioristic? Because it starts with the observation of the behavior of the acting persons.

This is the central thesis of Mead’s theory. The self does not exist before a person is involved in the social process of interaction. Mead understands ‘interaction’ as verbal communication by virtue of gestures, or of the symbols of our language. Mead repeats constantly: “Selves can only exist in definite relationships to other selves” [1, p. 164].

I would like to begin by reviewing the main principles and concepts of Mead’s dialectic:

Firstly, I will cover the main concepts, which are used by Mead to describe the social process of the origin of the self. These are: ‘I’, ‘Me’, ‘Game’, ‘Play’, ‘Symbol’, ‘Generalized Other’ and last but not least, ‘Self’. Below we will see how they function. Secondly, we will discuss the specific social dialectic of Mead’s theory. In this dialectic, we must deal with two concepts, ‘I’ and ‘Me’, which are necessary for self-construction. Thirdly, one of the

ideas behind Mead's type of behaviorism is that research in the field should not be static but rather "genetic" in Husserl's terms. It means that we do not have a static picture of the subject, but a genetic one, which arises in a dialectical process. Fourthly, one of the main characteristics of the self is that it has to be an object of itself.

When we say the 'self' many connotations instantly come to mind. With which position can we identify our own 'self'? Is it a body, a soul or an Ego? We see that it is necessary to differentiate between these concepts. In different places in his works, Mead gives various distinctions.

First of all, we must settle the difference between 'self' and 'body'. My own body seems to be the first position through which I can identify myself. But according to Mead, this is not the case as, if one loses a part of his body it does not mean that he loses a part of his self [1, p. 136]. In addition, the body can exist without the self. This means that according to Mead my body cannot be identified with the self. The self is in no way psychological organism [1, p. 139].

Nevertheless, it seems that we have something in us that can be understood as the principle of our identification. Metaphysics teaches us that there is a soul in our body which can be named our own 'self'. But for Mead, the idea of immortal soul cannot be taken into account because it is of pure metaphysical value.

Despite the fact that a Cartesian Ego, and an Ego in Kant's transcendental philosophy, seems to be more metaphysic than real, one can take it into account and can name it as an identification point. Mead uses the word 'Ego' too but not as often. Usually when he does refer to the 'Ego', he means the 'I'. One of the definitions of the self, given by Mead, is as follows: "The self is something which has a development" [1, p. 135]. This description is highly dialectical. We will now follow the argumentation of Mead more thoroughly.

### **Developmental Stages of the Self in Mead's Theory**

One of the points Mead made was postulating that the arising of self-identification and language are closely connected. As it was mentioned above, the main idea of social behaviorism by Mead is that the self is not inborn, but is developing through social communication. If everyone were alone, there would be no self. In this case, the self would be invisible. Mead uses a special method of the self-discovering: For the self to be a self it needs to become a quality of the object. One of the preliminary answers to the question about the possibility of self is that it arises through communication in language, through conversation. Mead formulates very promising things:

That the person should be responding to himself is necessary to the self, and it is this self appears. I know no other form of behavior than the language in which the individual is an object to himself, and, so far as I can see, the individual is not a self in the reflexive sense unless he is an object to himself [1, p. 142].

Any person becomes, through language communication, the quality of the object. This should be considered as a preliminary thesis for further analysis. It provokes a new point of view: through the symbols of our language we are aware of ourselves, of our 'self'. But how do reflection and language correlate with each other? We can see that from the first look it is hard to evaluate what is meant by the thesis. I would interpret the role and scope of language in Mead's theory as the only possible method of understanding what occurs in the others soul. It means that the person can explain only through symbolic lan-

guage what is in his or her mind. This postulation provokes a lot of questions. In terms of Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity, for example, it is a principally impossible assertion. I will return to this thesis when examining Husserl's theories.

Not only language causes the arising of the self, but also the iteration of two social activities, play and game. To understand play, one can look at how children use play to establish different rules. For Mead, it is of great interest that children use play to change their social roles. They are trying to be policemen, teachers, sellers, etc. this means that by changing identities they acquire their own. It occurs by virtue of language too, because "The child says something in one character and responds in another character, and then his responding in another character is a stimulus to himself in the first character, and so the conversation goes on" [1, p. 151]. One can see that in this iteration we must deal with multiple identifications. It seems as if the child lives different lives and possesses different languages. And thanks to the fact that the child asks as one person and responds as another, he gets his own identification as a self in accordance to Mead's theory.

It is a stepping-stone in Mead's theory because the next notion, 'game', constitutes the higher level of the self. Game as a competition has a slightly different social meaning. When in play, a child learns his own role in the society by duplicating the roles of others in a game as competition, the child or adult follows already defined social regulations. One of Mead's examples is a game of baseball. In this game, everyone has a definite task and a goal. There are already stipulated rules that everybody must follow. The main goal is to win, but to achieve it every person in the common society must understand the general strategy of the team and must know his or her definite place in the common strategy. "The fundamental difference between the game and play is that in the latter the child must have the attitude of all the others involved in that game" [1, p. 153, 154]. At this stage, Mead puts to use the notion of the 'generalized other' which means "the organized community or social group which gives to the individuals his unity of self" [1, p. 154]. We have to understand the concept in a very concrete sense. To understand the 'generalized other' American sociologist use the definitive social community of a baseball team, job-colleagues, court where I live, etc.

It seems as if we are very close now to solving the problem of identification after following the steps of communication by way of symbolic language, play, game, and self-identification through the generalized other. Nevertheless, the self is not yet formed because it still must be grasped as an object, and the steps described above were the preliminary actions. Now we are at the main point of Mead's theory of identification. In a strict sense the person can have the self only after considering the inner dialectic of the 'I' and the 'Me'. Mead gives the following definition, demarcating these notions:

The 'I' is the response of the organism to the attitudes of the others; the 'Me' is the organized set of attitudes of the others which one himself assumes. The attitudes of the others constitute the organized 'Me', and then one reacts toward that as an 'I' [1, p. 175].

In some respect one can interpret the dialectic of the 'I' and the 'Me' as an old dialectic between the singular and the common, between the individual and the society. Under the 'I' we can understand a reaction of a person in a situation<sup>1</sup>. And Mead sometimes speaks about the 'I' as being similar to the Ego in the Kantian sense. Otherwise Mead identifies the 'I' as having freedom and creativity. The initial dialectic consists in a conflict between

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<sup>1</sup> Wagner interprets the dialectic of 'I' and 'Me' that 'Me' is a characteristics of the situation and 'I' is a reaction on the situation [2, p. 77].

the social 'Me' and the creative 'I'. The 'I', the thinking and the conscious 'I', is in opposition to the socialized 'Me'. It is a source of any possible changes in the society.

The method in which the 'I' can be grasped as an object is described by Mead as follows: "The 'I' does not get into the limelight; we talk to ourselves but do not see ourselves" [1, p. 174], writes Mead. It is not given directly. At present, we deal with the 'Me' structure, but if, for example, I remembered what I said a month ago, I would not remember 'Me' but my 'I' in the form of an object. Only after the objectivity of the I-Me can we say that the self is formed.

At the end of this short presentation of Mead's main ideas, we can see that his process of the development of the self is a purely social process: "the self, as that which can be an object to itself, is essentially a social structure, and it arises in social experience" [1, p. 140].

### **Some Critical Comments on Mead's Conception of the Self**

Once analyzed, Mead's main terms listed above can inspire fruitful questions. I will concentrate on an analysis of some specific aspects of his theory.

#### **Language and the Self**

We have seen that in Mead's theory, language and reflection play a significant role in the creation of the self. It can be demonstrated more fully in examples given in Mead's other writings. I will stress the initial point of such analysis. Mead connects the symbols of language or meanings with social acts and, as a result, with self-consciousness and development of the self. He writes: "I desire [...] to emphasize and elaborate the position taken earlier that only in the relation of this mutual adjustment of social stimulation and response to the activities which they ultimately mediate, can the consciousness of meaning arise" [3, p. 125].

It should be stressed that Mead's argumentation is more idea-outlines than collaborated logical argumentation. He understands language as a set of symbols and does not speak about grammatical and semantic rules. Symbolic language is a form of communication higher than gestures, which are of a social nature and serve as tools for understanding between people. I could separate two types of language symbols arising in accordance to Mead's theory. Firstly, they must be separated from things and, secondly, they have to describe a reaction of an organism to a definite situation. The symbols help us to remember the situation in which I react in a definite way to stimuli. In this case, we get a meaning or a sense of the symbols as a reaction to this stimuli [3, p. 216]. The first symbols that I constitute have a meaning only for the subjects' own feelings. But Mead asserts that language (as a set of these symbols) is of a social nature. It means that symbols that have meaning firstly for myself, have to be approved in social communication. In some respects, language is a better and more advanced system than gestures [3, p. 221]. Language plays its role for social communication, and we must understand this thesis in a pragmatic way. When I communicate with others I can understand them through the description of feelings, which are similar to my own and for which I have symbols. The presumption is that the other has the same symbols to describe the same feelings as I have.

We can summarize it that way: the other has its own feelings and ideas, which he expresses through his gestures and language symbols and which I can understand by virtue

of my own inner experience [3, p. 221]. Analyzed critically, Mead's assertion would bring nothing new to the common understanding. But we should take into account an additional remark of the American philosopher concerning the self as an object. Mead offers two models for it: the first model I will call an 'inner language', and the second one is an 'identification in a memory'.

Mead describes the situation of 'inner language' in this way: when I speak with myself I produce a situation as if I am speaking with others too. It is as if I could really communicate with others and as if I am an object to others. The result is: in my inner life, I imagine myself as an object and it was a presumption for the arising of the self. In some respects, this situation seems to be very similar to the 'play' described by Mead when children learn to play different roles. Mead substantiates this assertion: "A person who is saying something is saying to himself what he says to others; otherwise he does not know what he is talking about" [1, p. 147]. I would like to decrypt the meaning. It can mean that I say firstly to myself and if I understand what I say to myself the other can understand as well and so the self arises. It can also mean: first I say something, and after the reaction to my saying something by the other I understand what I have said. We see that the second interpretation lacks sense because it means that I say something that is without any meaning, and only then by virtue of the other I can understand what I have actually said. The first interpretation could mean that I know what I say in advance. In this case, principally speaking, I do not need the other and the social environment.

If Mead's assumption is correct, it means that the grade of my self depends on the level of my ability to express my thoughts through language. And it means that anybody who knows the language better (a literary man for example) has a more well defined self. Does this necessary follow from the Mead's theory? Not likely. Another example: I need to express my thoughts in a foreign language. Does it mean that anyone who is speaking their mother tongue is more capable of expressing his thoughts and as a result better processes his self? Another question: Mead suggests that the behavior of my body is not always conscious and sometimes automatic, which means without a self-procession. Could not we assert the same in respect to language? Could we not say that sometimes our language communication is senseless? This covers the questions concerning Mead's thesis. It is only fair to say that in his thesis, Mead only outlines and does not properly develop his ideas. I think that many questions which arise in respect to the language theory by Mead are based on assumptions that the American philosopher considers language as a static set of symbols. The symbols are the modified gestures of a higher level and are taken into account without a special analysis of their origin and genesis.

### Identification in a Memory

We have seen that all aspects of self-arising (play, game, language etc.) are closely connected in Mead's theory. It seems as if the he is seeking for a way to grasp myself as an object but not as a vague, pure 'I' in a Kantian sense. He fairly asserts that even though there is dialectic between the 'I' and the 'Me' we cannot grasp the 'I' directly. One of the possible ways to do so was with an 'inner language'. The other possible method is the identification in a memory.

This step means that in our real life my 'I' is in some respect a position that cannot not be identified as the 'I'. Because, as it was described before: the 'I' cannot be grasped



as it is not an object but rather an I-idea and its position is vague. What is the way out of the situation? Mead asserts that in a memory when I represent the situation of my recent activity, I represent myself, but in a new light. The 'I' can be handled as an object. I would like to insist that there is a problem here: what is creative and new in me does not exist but can be taken through reflection and the memory? In some respects, Mead offers a reply to this question when he says that in remembering I can imagine myself as an acting object (as 'Me') and can identify it with my 'I' in a present reality. I represent a situation I have been in the past. In this case, I can see the picture from my past situation with me as an early acting person, but my present 'I' correlates with my past 'I' in the form of 'Me' i.e. as an object. That I see myself in the past with eyes as if I am in the present, is on the same level as others observing me in the past. To clarify this thesis, he turns back to the situation with an 'inner language' and strengthens the argumentation. He says that in my inner life, the reproduction of my past situation reproduces the situation when I speak to myself as if I speak with any other person: "It is also to be noted that this response to the social conduct of the self may be in the role of another — we present his arguments in imagination and do it with his intonations and gestures and even perhaps with his facial expression" [4, p. 146]. We see that Mead connects two arguments: 1. In my remembering I represent my 'I' as 'Me', 2. Speaking with myself I represent a situation of a real dialog when the other considers me to be an object of his communication.

As for the first thesis, the main problem from my point of view is the identification criterion for the 'I' in the past and the real 'I' now. Mead does not clarify the mechanism of identification. It is only an assertion. The situation with an inner dialog has a problem as described above: as far as I am in communication with the other I must have a language as a system already.

Mead concludes: "Until this process has been developed into the abstract process of thought, self-consciousness remains dramatic, and the self which is a fusion of the remembered actor and this accompanying chorus is somewhat loosely organized and very clearly social" [4, p. 378]. We see that in this short thesis all Mead's notions of Social Interaction are connected.

### Generalized Other

The conception of the 'generalized other' provokes many parallels — especially with Heidegger's 'Man' — and the notion will be developed by Heidegger some decades later. From my point of view the main problem connected with the 'generalized other' is that Mead's theory of social interaction is reductionist. It means that the self can be changed depending on the social environment and circumstances of the person in question. The social theory of Mead cannot be definitively reduced to the play of baseball as a pattern, but nevertheless some principles can be compared. In his system, the point is that every person is necessarily located in a definite social situation with defined rules, and whether they are concrete and verbal, or vague, they are strictly kept. The first question that needs to be asked is about the multiple social communities in which the person is involved. Does the person have, in this case, a different social identification, different models and different selves as well? Mead does not discuss the topic directly, but it seems that from his point of view it is the case. When the person changes their social environment with different 'generalized others', his or her self has to be changed as well. At least, that's what

follows from his theoretical position. As such, it is very difficult to extract the irreducible identity of the self in the person.

Again, we see that according to Mead the self is not established in advance, but rather it is constituted in the social process due to the subjects of others. Mead worked out a very interesting model of social interaction. Nevertheless, it provokes a lot of questions, some of which we will consider. Now I would like to turn to a phenomenological tradition in order to determine if this method is preferable for solving these problems.

### Husserl. Self as a Transcendental Ego

Two main points characterize the differences between Mead and Husserl's theories. The first point is that Mead's conception is principally non-transcendental<sup>2</sup>. This is not difficult to explain because his main idea is that the life-world is social and an interaction between different persons is a social process. The second point is: by Mead's theory, the self is determined in a social process and does not exist in advance. I have already noted that it can be understood as a philosophical relativism. On the contrary Husserl's conception is transcendental and the transcendental 'I' in his theory plays a leading role. In the following I will discuss if the phenomenological method is more fruitful in comparison to the theory of Mead<sup>3</sup>.

By describing of George Herbert Mead's theory, we have seen that one of the main issues was a weak elaboration of the problem of self-identification in respect to different sides of subject. How can we say that the 'I' in the present and 'I' as 'Me' in the past are the same subject? Husserl's phenomenology gives a definite but very original reply to the problem.

Now I am entering a different territory of philosophy: phenomenology. I would like to stress that I will not present and elaborate all aspects of Husserl's theory concerning the 'I' and the self. I will concentrate on discussing Husserl's ideas in comparison with the questions which were discussed by Mead. Husserl does not speak as much as Mead about the Self. In his vocabulary, the word is not used very often. But nevertheless, we can deal with the identification problem in another way. The main idea and main goal of Husserl's phenomenology was to show how the transcendental intentional consciousness functions. And in terms of Husserl's phenomenology, the identification problem can be analyzed as a question about the unity of these intentional acts. This area of the consciousness can be reached by the virtue of transcendental reduction and we deal in this case with a purely transcendental consciousness. The method of transcendental reduction as it was first described in "Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie" (Ideas Pertaining a Pure Phenomenology) is highly complex, but for our purposes we can use the result, namely the postulation of the transcendental consciousness's existence, without critical analysis of the reduction procedure.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Van Ames writes the following in his article about the self problem by Husserl and Mead: "Mead has no interest in transcendental realm, because all that is real and ideal in human life can be stated by him in social terms, which are those of nature" [5, p. 194].

<sup>3</sup> For example, the modern researcher Norman Denzin writes about the problem: "[...] the 'I' and the 'me' cannot be taken to be referents of stable, internal structures of the self. Those self theories which argues of the self into self from outside, social world fail to account for how language reconceptualizes those structures in terms of metaphoric and metonymic process" [6, p. 74]



I will concentrate my argumentation on some aspects concerning the problem of the self by Husserl.

### Intentionality and an Identification Problem

After executing the reduction, we must deal in the transcendental area with an intentional current of the consciousness. And if we would like to speak about the identification problem of the subject we must speak about the unity of identity within its intentional current of the consciousness. There are two main strategies in analyzing the problem; the egological conception and the non-egological one [7, p. 56]. The difference is as follows: in the first conception, the principle of unity or of identification is a transcendental Ego, in the second, the Ego is not necessary for the unity of the consciousness. If we turn back to Husserl we can say that he presented both theories at different times in his research.

Husserl started with the non-egological conception of the consciousness in his earlier text (1905) "Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins" (On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time). A time analysis is as follows. There are three common time dimensions 'Vergangenheit' (past), 'Jetzt' Punkt ('now' point) and 'Zukunft' (future). But the time-consciousness constitutes time-objects in this dimension. The time-consciousness is at once retentive (forwarded to the past) and protentive (forwarded to the future) through the actual time-position 'Jetzt' (now). Firstly, time identity is fulfilled through retention when the consciousness is all at once a unity of all previous now-positions, which constitutes something like a comet's tail. Through this act of identification an identical time-object is constituted. The second type of consciousness identification concerns intentionality. Husserl says that our time-consciousness possesses a double identification intentionality. Through the first or 'Längsintentionalität' (long intentionality) the identical time-object is constituted. Through the second or 'Querintentionalität' (crosswise intentionality) the unity of one and the same consciousness is constituted [8, p. 82]. This is outlined identification problem in Husserl's early work.

It seems as if the problem of identification is solved. Nevertheless, in later works Husserl speaks about other identification principles. He turns to the egological conception of consciousness. In his work "Ideen zur einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie" he speaks explicitly about the role and the scope of the pure Ego:

Let us think of a self-perception as accomplished, but this time in such a way that we abstract from the Body. What we find then is ourselves as the spiritual Ego [...] we limit ourselves therefore to intentional lived experiences which "we" have each case "accomplished" and throughout which we, or, let us say more clearly, I, the Ego that in each case "thinks," have directed the ray of the Ego onto what is objective in the act. We now focus on the Ego in which the "I think" reigns, and purely as what reigns therein, hence on the Ego given in absolute indubitability as the "*sum cogitans*". [...] I take myself as the pure Ego insofar as I take myself purely as that which, in perception, is directed to the perceived, in knowing to the known [...] In the accomplishment of each act lies a ray of directedness I cannot describe otherwise than by saying thereby remains undivided and numerically identical while it lives in there manifold acts, spontaneously takes an active part in them, and by means of ever new rays goes through these acts toward what is objective in their sense [9, pp. 103, 104].

The summary of this long citation is that the pure 'I' is a center of all kinds of intentional acts and is, in every time-position, numerically identical. It seems as if we have found an answer in Husserl's egological phenomenology to the question of identification. This is the 'I' that is in the center of an intentional life.

In the following we will analyze the position of the 'transcendental I' as the identification center.

### Ego and Reflection

One can say that Husserl's theory of the transcendental consciousness is a reflexivity theory. We can satisfy such a reflection with the Ego being an object of itself and this Ego living in every act of the consciousness. Examples are posited in citations in one of Husserl's works found here: the I-ness is objectified through reflection [10, p. 53]. But when we are trying to speak about the Ego as an object of the reflexive act we encounter a lot of problems.

I would like to reiterate that one of Mead's theses held that self arises when it becomes an object of himself. One of the objectivation possibilities was through language. The second possibility was a possibility in time, when we can grasp the 'I' in our past acts. The first assertion is not discussed by Husserl. Even when he tries to solve the intersubjectivity problem he does not consider language at all. His method is a constitutive one. But it is through time analysis that we can find methodological similarities between Mead and Husserl.

We have seen that in one of his yearly texts "Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins" (On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time) Husserl does not use the notion of the transcendental Ego. A unity of time-consciousness was fulfilled through long and cross intentionalities (Lang- und Querintentionalitäten). But in the later Manuscripts which were published after the "Bernauer Manuskripte (1971/1918)" and the "C-Manuscripts (1929–1934)" we begin to deal with a transcendental Ego.

How does it function and what does it bring to us? It is remarkable that Husserl refers to the self both in the "Bernauer-" and "C- Manuscripts" using something similar to George Herbert Mead. For example, we can find in his "Bernauer manuscripts" something similar to an aporia of the transcendental 'I' when Husserl writes that the 'I' does not exist, and is opposite to all existing, not a thing, but a source of all things [11, p. 277]. The 'I' is at once the object and is not the object. It is the object because in any reflection model the subject-object relation is presupposed. But it also cannot be the object because the 'I' is an actor of timing as well. But the 'I' in the time current exists in an unusual way: It is out of time but nevertheless it constitutes the time. In the manuscripts, Husserl distinctly names the 'I' the center of identification. In the C-manuscripts, Husserl repeats the idea but he uses the notion of the 'Ur-Ich' (primary I). The objects are given to this primary 'I' but the 'I' itself exists anonymously and is at the same time a reflexivity center.

We see that the topics discussed by Mead and Husserl are in some ways very similar. The 'I', which for Husserl is transcendental, and for Mead is a necessary condition of the self, is very hard to grasp. Husserl asserts in "Ideas" and in his manuscripts that the 'I', despite the fact that it is a reflexivity center, is not an object.

Getting back to the representation problem. There is a three-dimensional structure, retention — original impressions — protention, all with only one identical transcendental

Ego. The same is true for the memory as well. Husserl says that when we reflect in our memory by the renewing of our perceptive acts (*Wiedererinnerung*) we can state that the same Ego is and was in the past act and in the act of recollection. The identity of the Ego is presupposed in retention, now, protention, and recollection. But there is one special act of perception which is called phantasy. We can imagine ourselves in situations that never have been and never will be. Can we identify the Ego there too? I would like to assert that the identity is fulfilled. For example, Eduard Marbach says:

The things appearing in the imagination, again not unlike what is the case in remembering, point here, to a zero-point of orientation. In his analysis of imagining, Husserl therefore concluded, convincingly, I think, that in act of imaging *I* am necessarily co-present after all, as center of the orientation, as subject, to which the appearances are related. I am thus not only co-present as the one who actually images something [12, p. 87].

We see that in phantasy we can or have to imagine the 'I' as an orientation center. But for this 'I' as a kinesthetic center, we can imagine our body. Edith Stein uses this example in her dissertation "*Über Einfühlung*" (On empathy) when she writes that in imagination the 'I' cannot be represented without a body [13, p. 64]. What does this mean? It means that the problem of identification is very closely connected to the mind-body dialectic and even though Husserl is a transcendental philosopher, the body problem was important for him and for his intersubjectivity problem.

#### The Role of the Intersubjectivity Problem for Self-Identification in Phenomenology

In the context of analyzing the identification problem it is necessary to speak about Husserl's intersubjectivity problem. Solving this problem was very important for him. He undertook its examination in his older work (1929) "*Kartesianische Meditationen* (Cartesian Meditations)". I will not discuss all the nuances of his theory and will only outline his main steps and results relevant to the topic of the research.

As we have seen, the principle of the identification of the self as posited by Mead was based on the social environment. Now, we will speak about Husserl's methodology in respect to the discussion of the problem. After fulfillment of the transcendental reduction we are in the area of the transcendental Ego. There is a danger here that only one Ego exists, and in that case the general goal of Husserl's phenomenology to be a universal science for everybody cannot be satisfied. The problem of identification is not as clear as it was for Mead, especially since the transcendental Ego is this pole of intentionality and reflexing. Otherwise one can say that the identity of the Ego is the initial point for the intersubjectivity problem. If it is so, what does it mean for our analysis of the identification problem?

The theory of intersubjectivity by Husserl is a theory of 'Einfühlung' (empathy). It means that empathy is the only way to prove the existence of the other transcendental 'I'. Once again, contrary to Mead, Husserl does not mention that we can understand the other through his expressions of language. In no case! We first need to subscribe to the other body the soul life as it is in our own body. Husserl does this by the 'apperception transferring' (*Apperzeptive Übertragung*) of our own experience into the body of another [14, p. 140].

But what does this give us in regard to our problem of identification? On the one hand, it seems that we have already found the initial point of identification, the transcendental 'I'. But the theory of empathy that was developed in connection with the intersubjectivity problem allowed Husserl to subscribe the apperceptions as belonging to anybody. It means that the act of the ego is not anonymous consciousness anymore and has

to belong to anybody. The identification of the subject must be fulfilled. The act of the ego must belong to Me or to the Other. There is not a universal consciousness in phenomenology<sup>4</sup>.

From this point of view, all the perceptions are perceptions of somebody and could not belong to nobody. Thus, it means that the conception of non-egological, in other words anonymous, consciousness is not true<sup>5</sup>.

If we speak about a present intentional act, the situation is to a certain extent clear. The 'I', the transcendental 'I' in this case, is the center of the transcendental life and fulfills the acts. But the problem arises when we are trying to analyze the temporal intentional acts; namely the past and future acts of the transcendental Ego.

## Conclusion

We have examined some aspects of Mead's and Husserl's subjectivity conceptions. Now we can come to some conclusions.

The difference between these two philosophers with respect to the identity problem is clear. Consciousness and self-consciousness are different terms for Mead. In his theory, consciousness gets its own self and identification only in the social act. On the contrary, we can assert that the reflexivity of consciousness presupposes the identification of it as it was stated by Husserl. And as we have seen, the self-identity in the phenomenology is fulfilled through the Ego itself. In some respects, the advantage of the phenomenological theory is that it is not a reductionist position, but rather a constitutive method<sup>6</sup>.

The method of Ego grasping is problematic for both philosophers. It cannot be comprehended through the usual act of apperception. As we have seen in the time analyses by Mead and Husserl, it occurs on the edge of perception. For Mead, we could grasp the Ego (I) in remembering. Nevertheless, the step of identification is problematic, because the actual subject's life cannot be identified clearly and can only be identified in the past. In contrast to Mead, Husserl's transcendental Ego remains constantly at the center of past, actual, and future life. Firstly, it remains a factor of the self-identification, secondly it has a meta-transcendental level, because it does not belong to things but is in some respects a ground of all things.

Nevertheless, the anonymous character of the transcendental subject does not satisfy Husserl and he developed an intersubjectivity problem. This step is oriented on the social structure of the world: from developing this strict, elaborate, transcendental theory Husserl goes toward a world of social interaction. We see that both the theories and concep-

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<sup>4</sup> See [15, p.42].

<sup>5</sup> Zahavi writes the following on the topic: „To speak of a fundamental anonymity prior to any distinction between self and other obscures that which has to be clarified, namely intersubjectivity understood as the relation between subjectivities. On the level of radical anonymity there is neither individuation or selfhood, but nor is there any differentiation, alterity, or transcendence, and there is consequently room for neither subjectivity nor intersubjectivity“ [7, p. 60].

<sup>6</sup> Norman Denzin sees the advantage of the phenomenology in respect to self-structure describing. Mead's I-me structure is stable and not dialectical. Norman Denzin compares Mead's construction to the phenomenological conceptions of Heidegger, and Sartre which conceptions of the self are decentralized [6, p.68]. With respect to Husserl it seems irrelevant because his transcendental 'I' is centralized in the same manner as the I-me structure by Mead. At the same time, it was the intention of this article to demonstrate that the constitutive principle Husserl's phenomenology cannot be compared with the social relativism of George Herbert Mead.

tions are in some ways opposed. Husserl begins with the assertion that our transcendental life is identified through the Ego as a center. Later, by his solving the intersubjectivity problem, some of the nuances arise, but the main principle remains. In some respects, the phenomenological conception seems to be more convenient and stronger than the one posited by Mead.

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